

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MOPS, IS, LE
SUBJECT: PRESS APPROVES OPERATION; BEGINS TO QUESTION ONWARD PLANNING

1. TODAY'S PRESS REFLECTS THE UNIVERSAL APPROVAL OF THE ISRAELI PUBLIC FOR THE IDF'S ACTION. ASIDE FROM THE COMMUNISTS, NO ONE HAS QUESTIONED THE NEED FOR THE RESPONSE AND THERE IS LITTLE CRITICISM FOR THE CONCEPT OR EXECUTION OF THE OPERATION. SEVERAL ARTICLES PRAISED THE CARE EXERCISED BY THE IDF TO MINIMIZE CIVILIAN CASUALTIES. UNLIKE THE AFTERMATH OF PREVIOUS RETALIATIONS (THE MEDIA AS WELL AS THE GOVERNMENT ARE STUBBORNLY AVOIDING THIS TERM), THERE IS NO CRITICISM OF "USING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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A SHOTGUN TO KILL A FLY."

2. SEVERAL COMMENTATORS POINT OUT THAT ALTHOUGH STRATEGIC SURPRISE WAS PERHAPS UNATTAINABLE, GIVEN THE CERTAINTY OF AN ISRAELI RESPONSE FOLLOWING LAST SATURDAY'S BLOOD-LETTING, THE SIZE OF THE FORCE AND THE SOPHISTICATION OF THE OPERATION SUCCEEDED IN ACHIEVING AT LEAST TACTICAL SURPRISE. WRITING IN YEDYOT AHARONOT, BEN PORAT MAKES THIS

POINT AND ANOTHER THAT REFLECTS A CERTAIN SMUGNESS AMONG POLITICAL PUNDITS HERE: "THERE ARE THOSE WHO THOUGHT THAT THIS TIME, TOO, ISRAEL WOULD AS IN THE PAST CONTENT HERSELF WITH SHELLING OF CERTAIN SELECTED TARGETS, BECAUSE OF FEARING OF SYRIAN INTERVENTION AND A RESULTING MAJOR CONFLAGRATION LIKELY TO DISRUPT NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT. BUT IN REALITY THE CONTRARY WAS THE CASE; THIS TIME THE IDF, FOR ITS ACTION IN THE TRIANGLE STRETCHING FROM THE HERMON AND FATAHLAND TO THE COAST, WENT INTO ACTION WITH A COMBINATION THAT INCLUDED INFANTRY, ARMOR, NAVY AND AIR FORCE. AS A RESULT THE TERRORISTS WERE BOXED IN WITH SOME OF THE FORCES CLOSING IN FROM NORTHWEST IN A Pincer MOVEMENT." ISRAELIS ARE, IN FACT, RELIEVED BUT NOT SURPRISED THAT SYRIA HAS HELD ITS FIRE. TO A GREAT EXTENT, THEY ARE ASCRIBING THIS TO THE IDF'S CAREFUL PLANNING AND EXECUTION AS WELL AS TO WHAT THEY SEE AS DAMASCUS' OVER-EXTENDED MILITARY DEPLOYMENT AND ITS ARMY'S RELATIVE INFERIORITY.

3. THE POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC FOLLOW-UP TO THE MILITARY OPERATION RECEIVED MIXED NOTICES. AS THE VAGUE OUTLINES OF BEGIN'S PLANS UNFOLDED AT LAST NIGHT'S PRESS CONFERENCE, DIFFERENCES BEGAN TO APPEAR. MAPAM'S SEC GEN, MEIR TALMI, AS REPORTED DECLARING THAT THE GOVERNMENT MUST STATE EXPLICITLY THAT THE IDF WILL WITHDRAW FROM LEBANON ONCE THE AREA HAS BEEN CLEARED OF TERRORISTS. THE SHARPEST QUESTIONING OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANNING AND INTENTIONS, HOWEVER, IS AN ARTICLE BY HAIM IZAK IN DAVAR. HE WRITES "TWENTY FOUR HOURS AFTER IT (THE OPERATION) BEGAN, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WE ARE STILL ASKING OURSELVES WHAT ARE ITS PRECISE OBJECTIVES AND ITS ESTIMATED RANGE; SOME WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHETHER ALL POSSIBLE REPERCUSSIONS HAD BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT." NOTING THAT SOME POLICY-MAKERS SEEM TO BE THINKING OF A LONG-TERM ENTRENCHMENT IN THE "SECURITY BELT", IZAK SAYS THIS SEEMS TO REST ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE US WOULD COME TO TERMS WITH SUCH A SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON. "SUCH AN ASSUMPTION WOULD BE RATHER NAIVE AND MORE IN THE NATURE OF WISHFUL THINKING THAT OF CLEAR POLITICAL FORESIGHT. THE IDEA THAT THE US WOULD USE ITS VETO IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL IN MARCH OF 1978 TO BRING ABOUT THE ACCEPTANCE OF AN ISRAELI OCCUPATION IN LEBANON, EVEN IF ONLY TEMPORARY, IS SO FAR-FETCHED, THAT NO RESPONSIBLE POLITICIANS COULD EVER BE EXPECTED TO FALL FOR IT."

(THE ABOVE PROCESSED AS RECEIVED FROM ROUGH DRAFT)
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